

Hazleton, North Dakota
May 22, 1944

Dear Mr. Stevens,

I received your most interesting letter of May 13th, last week. I'll admit that I am puzzled about the whole affair and I think I have good reason to be.

Yes, we have received the "remains" of our son on April 21. We also had the undertaker open the casket, although we spent nearly all day arguing to get it opened. And it was no wonder they didn't want us to open it. There was nothing in there except a uniform and four teeth. They said there were three more bones supposed to be buried in the sand at the bottom of the casket. I should have taken a look at the bones but I didn't. I think the sand was just put in to make weight and not to keep the bones from rattling as we were told. They told me that Walter was identified by the impressions of those teeth. I don't see how though because there was no enamel on the teeth. As much as I know the enamel stays on much longer than that. Everyone that saw those teeth said they must have been about 20 years old.

Do you happen to know if they take impressions of the teeth of those in the Air Corps? I know they don't in the regular army.

Did you receive your son's identification tag? The escort told me they never found Walter's identification tag; in fact he told ^{me} they found only 4 tags.

If any of your son's personal belongings were returned, where were they sent from? In a letter received from Kansas City (also from where the personal belongings were received) it was stated they arrived from overseas.

Also I can't imagine why Walter didn't write to me after June 20th (that was two weeks before the accident occurred). He never made me wait that long for a letter. Also his will was made out on June 20 (on a Sunday). The last letter he wrote to me was on June 20 and in that letter he never mentioned anything about it. The only thing he mentioned about his work was that he had to stop writing and get to work, and he wished he weren't on the night shift.

The escort told us a few conflicting stories about the accident. First he said there were wild hogs on the island and it was thought they destroyed the bodies. Later he denied this statement. He also said one motor and one wing was burned and the bodies were thrown clear of the wreckage. The escort contradicted himself with several more stories that I just don't feel like writing now. Perhaps he did this because he became so nervous about the whole affair.

I still haven't found out where the Bismarck Tribune got the story from that Walter's body was recovered off shore about one-half mile from the Santa Barbara airport.

I was disappointed last week, not being able to meet that friend or relative of yours that was in Hazelton. I can't see why my husband didn't invite him out to our house. He didn't seem to know anything about him.

The escort also told us that there is still one person left from the company that Walter was in and that he knew him personally.

Even though it is taking some time, but I still remember I owe you a picture that I promised to you.

There is a whole lot more I could say but I guess I'll leave it for my next letter or maybe sometime that we'll chance to meet.

Yours truly,

Mrs. Peter Eisenbarth

Mrs Peter Eisenbarth